Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. Private Holt was identified through dental record matching (the metal bridge matched Lancashire Fusiliers archives) and DNA confirmation from a living descendant. The reading explains that multiple methods are typically needed because any single method can fail or be inconclusive — dog tags are lost, DNA degrades, dental records may not exist. Using multiple independent methods increases confidence and provides legally and officially defensible identification.

2. For families like Margaret Holt's, identification converts decades of ambiguous loss into a definitive answer — the closure that comes from knowing rather than wondering. For historical understanding, the reading shows that individual identifications also reveal larger patterns: where soldiers came from, how they died, what the material conditions of the battle were. Each identified individual is both a personal story and a data point in understanding the human cost of a conflict.

Multiple Choice

1. C
2. B
3. A

Matching

1-D, 2-A, 3-E, 4-C, 5-B

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) MIA (Missing In Action), 2) metal detector, 3) DNA

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Battlefield archaeology differs because the site was created in a single violent event rather than accumulating gradually over time. This makes spatial relationships between artifacts especially informative — the distribution of objects across a landscape can reconstruct battle movements. Researchers are also often explicitly trying to identify individuals, not just understand anonymous populations, which adds a personal dimension that most excavations lack.

Q2: Battlefield sites present a difficult ethical balance: they are archaeological sites with research value, but they are also war graves — places where soldiers were buried, often in circumstances of great violence. Excavating them requires sensitivity to the fact that the remains belong to individuals with known names and

living descendants in many cases. Most researchers apply strict protocols for respectful handling and prioritize repatriation to families and governments over scientific retention.

Q3: Identification matters because it converts an ambiguous designation — MIA — into a definitive answer for families who have carried that uncertainty, sometimes for their entire lives. The reading notes that military traditions place extraordinary importance on accounting for the dead, and that closure from identification can be profound. It also matters historically: each identified individual adds to our collective accounting of the human cost of conflict.